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SUBJECT: READ-OUT OF APRIL 23 HCOC INFORMAL MEETING

REF: STATE 42285

Classified By: NTEC COUNSELOR E. SANBERG, REASONS 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Per reftel guidance, poloff attended the April 23, 2008, Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOC) informal meeting in Vienna. Around forty representatives of subscribing states attended this meeting, with several countries represented by officials from capitals. The current HCOC Chair, Bosnia, and the Immediate Central Contact (ICC, Austria) provided overviews and updates on their respective actions since the 2007 annual meeting. Discussion focused on the need to implement HCOC provisions, including submissions of Annual Declarations (ADs) and Pre-Launch Notifications (PLNs), outreach, the proposed UN General Assembly (UNGA) HCOC resolution, and ways to improve administrative efficiencies. The draft agenda was discussed, with the Russian Federation delegation lobbying for agreement to agenda language at the informal itself. Poloff raised reftel points on outreach, and encouraged the circulation of the draft agenda and draft UNGA resolution as soon as possible. The Chair and ICC undertook to circulate these drafts by early May. UNVIE has faxed copies of the proposed draft agenda and other background papers from the meeting to ISN/MTR. End Summary.

Large Audience with Capital Representation

¶2. (U) Of the forty or so participants, at least three countries had representatives from capitals - Germany, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. The German representative presented a paper on the status of HCOC implementation, and the Dutch representative presented a letter addressed from the Dutch Foreign Minister to HCOC subscribing states' Foreign Ministers, urging countries to work together to "give new impulse" to the implementation of HCOC, especially with regard to transparency measures (Note: both the paper and letter have been faxed to ISN/MTR. End Note). The Chair's comments focused on his activities since the 2007 annual meeting on outreach, promotion of a UNGA HCOC resolution, and encouragement to subscribing states to implement HCOC provisions, including the status of the Russian and U.S. positions on pre-launch notifications.

¶3. (U) The ICC focused on the need to enhance the administrative capabilities of HCOC, including an updated and streamlined point of contact list. The ICC also reported that only sixty ADs were received to date, and exhorted states to submit them as soon as possible. He noted that several states present had not submitted their AD's. The ICC also informed participants that the ICC had drafted a simplified, one-page AD (faxed to ISN/MTR) for use by states with no activities to report. The ICC explained that he hoped this "AD easy" would help ensure that more states submitted AD's. Later in the discussion, the Chair and ICC reported that New Zealand and Canada had not yet submitted their AD's, and Argentina and Turkey had submitted theirs late.

¶4. (C) Both the Chair and ICC also made a strong pitch for creating some sort of Secretariat or small seconded staff to

oversee the administrative details of HCOC as well as to ensure more consistent outreach efforts. The Chair explained that, although he believed he had had made an impact on HCOC activities, particularly through the March workshop for Middle Eastern and Gulf states, his "part time" status limited the scope of activity. The ICC offered the use of Austrian Foreign Ministry premises for any seconded staff. The UK representative gave a detailed discourse on "HCOC light" and the previous decision not to set up such a structure, the Russian representative cautioned against elevating this issue to the top of the annual meeting's agenda, the French representative said France was "cautious" about establishing a Secretariat, and the German representative supported the suggestion. Per reftel guidance, poloff stated that this discussion, and any decisions, must be referred to the annual meeting.

Outreach Discussion

15. (C) Reporting on his outreach activity, the Chair highlighted his workshop directed at Middle Eastern and Gulf countries as a positive experience. He reported that there were three new subscribing countries, but stressed the sensitivity regarding "quantity over quality," with seven countries with ballistic programs not HCOC subscribers. The Chair referenced a European Union seminar on outreach this past year. Per reftel guidance, poloff reported on U.S. outreach activity and urged countries to reach out to Bahrain.

The UNGA Resolution and the Agenda

16. (C) The Chair reported on the status of the UNGA HCOC resolution and Chair activities to advance such a resolution. He stated there should be work towards an UNGA resolution again this year in New York. Per reftel guidance, poloff urged the Chair to circulate the draft resolution as soon as possible; the Chair affirmed he would do so.

17. (C) Directing participants to the draft agenda contained in background papers, the Chair asked for comments. The Russian Federation representative lobbied strongly to include specific reference to the three Russian proposed amendments and a prioritization of proposals in the agenda. Other representatives, including the incoming Hungarian Chair, called for a detailed annotated agenda with old and new proposals attached. Per reftel guidance, poloff said the draft agenda should be circulated as is as soon as possible, and that the circulation of the agenda should not be delayed to wait for submission of proposals. The Chair and ICC suggested that the draft agenda could thus be circulated with a cover letter in early May (around May 1), and that the letter could invited subscribing states to send in their proposals by May 15 so that the ICC could recirculate these proposals in advance of the May 29 HCOC annual meeting. The Chair and ICC noted that advance copies of proposals could enable newer members to read-in on HCOC issues more easily and engender a more fruitful discussion at the annual meeting.

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